

and wonderful homes of Americans from all parts of our country.

At that gathering, one of the mothers who had adopted two children came up to me and said: Senator, please let them know in Congress how much we appreciate the adoption tax credit. It made all the difference to me and my husband as we decided to adopt our second child.

So we know that tax credit works. We know it has a positive impact, and part of our bill today extends that permanently so families can count on it.

With the cost of adoption still on the rise, this tax credit is an important factor, as I have mentioned. It has been estimated that adoptions can range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000, whether done privately or through an agency domestically or internationally.

Another figure to keep in mind is one that was released recently by a national adoptive parent organization. They estimate that using specialized foster or adoptive parents instead of what we do now, which is congregate care facilities for drug-exposed children, could save—and I believe the Senator from Texas, Mr. GRAMM, will be interested in this as he continues to fight for ways the Federal Government can save our money—they estimate we can save as much as \$550 million a year by relying on adoptive parents instead of keeping many of these children in the “system,” for which the taxpayers pay. Anything we can do to encourage adoption will not only be the right thing, the moral thing, the wonderful thing, and the family values thing to do, but it is smart for the taxpayers of the United States.

In addition, in case people are interested, there are more than 100,000 children in this country today waiting to be adopted—children who have had termination with their biological parents. They are waiting for someone to claim them as their own and to be adopted. There are 550,000 children in foster care. About 450,000 of those are in the process of either being returned to their families or they, too, can be eligible for adoption. Clearly, there is a need to promote adoption in this country that works for the benefit of birth parents, adoptive parents, and the children.

Finally, for parents to raise a child in their home, the estimates for a middle-class family are about \$140,000. That is not including college tuition or vocational education. That is just an estimate. The least we can do is help in a small way with a \$5,000 or \$10,000 tax credit to encourage families to be their partner in this adoption effort.

I believe not only does it simplify the Tax Code, but there is a great need, and the need has been demonstrated. The results have been terrific. We have had testimony after testimony about how important the current system has been, so anything we can do to improve

it I am sure will be welcomed by so many. It is a step in the right direction.

I close by saying, as we debate which tax credits to pursue, which are worthy, this adoption tax credit should be on the top of every list. We need to continue to be bold enough to take these steps because every time we do, children such as Serina, for whom people have given up hope, have found families on which to rely and with whom to grow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. I commend our colleague from Louisiana. Today we have 130 million people who work outside the home and earn income. We have some 260 million Americans. About 30 million of them get some form of public assistance. You might ask yourself: Who takes care of the other 100 million Americans? They are taken care of by families. And the driving force is love.

So not only is the distinguished Senator from Louisiana talking about saving money, but what adoptive parents will add to the equation is love and care. The whole world benefits from it. So I commend her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. I, too, thank the Senator from Louisiana for her leadership on this issue. We are fortunate enough to work together on this marvelous issue of adoption, chairing the adoption coalition here on the Senate side.

Both Senator LANDRIEU and I this week have helped host two delightful young ladies who are on the hill, Miss USA and Miss Teen USA, both adopted, both coming from adoptive families. They were in my office this morning speaking about the wonderful families they were allowed to be a part of who have granted them all of this charm and talent that can only come from a loving environment, that has allowed them to become national leaders, as they now are, as Miss USA and Miss Teen USA.

I say thank you to the Senator for her leadership on this issue. It is critically important to America and America's families.

PROJECT EXILE: THE SAFE STREETS AND NEIGHBORHOODS ACT OF 2000

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, today, I rise in support of S. 2390, “Project Exile: The Safe Streets and Neighborhoods Act of 2000”, which establishes a grant program to provide incentives for states to enact mandatory minimum sentences for certain firearms offenses. I commend Senator DEWINE for his leadership and appreciate the opportunity to join with him and other colleagues working together on this important legislation. The time has come to restore our commitment

to aggressively prosecuting gun crimes around this country. In states and cities around the country where aggressive prosecution of gun crimes is coupled with tough prison sentences, violent crime has gone down. Tough law enforcement saves lives.

This legislation provides \$100 million of additional resources over five years as incentives for efforts like Project Exile. To qualify for the grant program, states must have a mandatory minimum of 5 years without parole for convictions of violent crimes and serious drug trafficking offenses where a firearm is used during or in relation to the crime. In the alternative, the state can have a federal prosecution agreement which would refer those arrested for federal prosecution of the alleged gun crime in a collaborative effort between law enforcement.

Project Exile started in Richmond, Virginia as an attempt to reduce violent crime by aggressive enforcement of gun laws and improved law enforcement coordination. Since the program began in 1997, violent crimes involving handguns have decreased 65 percent and overall crime has been reduced by 35 percent. 385 guns were taken off of the street. In 1999, Project Exile was adopted statewide in Virginia. It has given prosecutors the ability to choose within which courts they will try offenders and created tougher penalties for people committing crimes with guns.

I have also worked to help expand this approach to Philadelphia in 1999, where “Operation Cease Fire” also adopts a zero tolerance policy for federal gun crimes. Project Exile has already proven that present laws can work if enforced properly. Federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors work side by side to expedite prosecution of every federal firearms violation. In 1999, over 200 federal gun-related indictments were issued in Philadelphia and the surrounding counties. This is a 70 percent increase in indictments in only one year.

The bill authorizes \$10 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001, \$15 million in FY02, \$20 million in FY03, \$25 million in FY04, and \$30 million in FY05. States must provide at least a 10 percent match and must also at least maintain current funding levels to qualify. Funds can be used for public awareness campaigns, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, probation and correctional officers, case management, coordination of criminal history records, and the juvenile justice system. Representative BILL MCCOLLUM introduced similar legislation in the House of Representatives as H.R. 4051. This legislation passed the House yesterday by a 358–60 vote margin.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this important initiative to collaborate with local efforts to prosecute and prevent the criminal use of guns in our schools and neighborhoods.